

NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION

We must remember in our study of the New Testament, that Palestine, although situated in the center, so to speak, of the civilized world, was only a small strip of land (140 by 100 miles in size) as compared with the populated earth. Civilization, outside of Palestine, had risen to a very advanced state.

The close of the Old Testament canon left Israel in two great divisions. The mass of the nation were dispersed throughout the Persian Empire, more as colonists than captives. A remnant of the tribe of Judah had returned to Palestine by the permission of the Persian kings and had established again the temple worship. Probably their experience in captivity away from the temple and priests had helped them to see the folly of idolatry, for, although they had indulged in heathen worship before the captivity, we find that long after the captivity when idolatry was practically forced upon them by the other nations, they resisted it even unto death. No doubt, the synagogue had its origin during the captivity, for the people, deprived of the temple worship, probably met together for the reading of the Scriptures and prayer on the Sabbath day.

After the writing of the last book of the Old Testament, about four hundred years elapsed, during which time no prophet of note appeared. The history of this four-hundred-year period is found in the writings of Josephus and the Maccabees. When Malachi wrote his prophecy, Palestine was under the rule of Persia. She was under this rule for about one hundred years during which time the rival worship of Samaria (John 4:19,20) was established.

According to the vision and interpretation in Dan. 2:32,39, the Jewish people passed from Persian to Grecian dominion. Alexander the Great, ruler of Greece and later of the world, was a very ambitious conqueror. His desire was to see the Hellenistic or Grecian civilization, which carried with it both idolatry and immorality, spread throughout his domain. The Jews resisted the idea of worshipping other gods; nevertheless, this Grecian culture with its beautiful architecture and flowery philosophy had its effect upon them in somewhat the same way modern thinking has its effect upon the Christians of today.

Alexander's reign was short-lived, for he died of excesses, almost as soon as he had obtained control of the world. After his death, his kingdom was divided into four parts, two of which were Syria and Egypt. Palestine, lying as it does between these countries, became a sort of battle ground. First, Syria obtained possession of it; then Egypt got control of it and kept it for about one hundred years. During this period, great numbers of Jews settled in Egypt, and the famous Septuagint version of the Old Testament (translation from Hebrew to Greek) quoted from so many times in the New Testament, was made. In 198 B. C., Palestine was taken from the power of Egypt and annexed to the Syrian kingdom again. A few years later, Antiochus Epiphanes came to the Syrian throne. He was a very wicked ruler and anxious to spread Hellenistic culture throughout his realm. He went so far as to set up the statue of Jupiter in the temple at Jerusalem, and sacrificed swine's flesh on the altar.

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The Jews, who had a spark of Jewish patriotism left in them, refused to approve such atrocities and fled to the wildernesses of Judea. Here an old priest and his five sons (the Maccabees) started a revolt against Antiochus. They were successful and secured the independence of Palestine for about one hundred years. During this period, the Jews allowed political rather than religious feeling to predominate. (The sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees had their rise at this time). Internal wars abounded and it was not until the Roman Empire, through the instrumentality of its General, Pompey, took Palestine and made it a Roman province, that the Jews once more began to look for the promised Messiah. This was in 63 B.C.

In 40 B. C. Herod the Great was made king of the Jews. He was a Jew in name only and was appointed to this position by the Roman Senate. It was he who was king when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Herod was eager to make Palestine Hellenistic in every sense of the word. He did much to beautify the city of Jerusalem as well as the other cities of the province. He built theatres, roads, bridges; introduced chariot races; and rebuilt, on a grand scale, the Temple at Jerusalem (partly that he might become a popular sovereign).

Augustus Caesar, perhaps the greatest of Roman Emperors, was ruler of the whole civilized world during the life of Jesus. While he ruled, the Empire was comparatively at peace.

So we see that God had prepared not only Palestine, but also the world, for the coming of the Saviour. First, there was a Universal Empire with its system of law and order (and its wonderful roads all leading to Rome); second, there was a Universal Language which was Greek; third, there was Universal Peace under Augustus; fourth, there was a Universal Need (the moral corruption, always present when a civilization is at its height; and the prevailing disgust of the people for the philosophies of the day, made everyone see his need for reality); and fifth, there was a Universal Expectation of a coming King or Messiah (this hope had been spread by the scattered Jewish colonists in all parts of the world).

Even though God had so wondrously prepared the world for His coming, we must not lose sight of the difficult circumstances Jesus had to face. The Jews had lapsed into the formality of the Law and self-righteousness. They had lost the real glimpse of the meaning of the Old Testament with its 333 predictions regarding Jesus' coming. Only a few looked for the Messiah as a Saviour (Simeon and Anna, Luke 2:25-38). Then, too, Palestine as well as the rest of the Empire, was filled with Gentile "culture" and immorality.

Such was the condition of the world to which Jesus came and for which He died.

NORTHWEST BIBLE INSTITUTE
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

NEW TESTAMENT SYNTHESIS

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

I. Title - - The book is so called because it was written by Matthew.

II. Theme - - "The Gospel according to Matthew was written originally in Hebrew and was especially designed for the use of the Jews, consequently the Old Testament is often quoted. There are no less than 60 references to the Old Testament writings as fulfilled in Christ. There is no discord between the four Gospels, as some imagine. Each was written with a specific purpose in view. Each gives a different portrait of the Lord Jesus. The portrait Matthew gives of Jesus is that of King. The word 'kingdom' is met with 55 times, 'kingdom of heaven' 32 times, 'Son of David' 7 times. In the book of Matthew we are taught the principles of the kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount, in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters, gives us the rule of the kingdom in mystery during the absence of the King. The parables of the kingdom, as found in Chapters 13, 20, 25, etc., give us the working of the kingdom." "Christ has four Sonship titles: The Son of Abraham, the Son of David, the Son of Man, the Son of God. All four of these titles are revealed in this book. Matt.1:1 indicates the scope and purpose of the book. This connects Jesus at once with two of the most important of the Old Testament covenants: the Davidic covenant of Kingship, and the Abrahamic covenant of Promise (2 Sam. 7:8-16; Gen.15:18). Matthew writes first of the King, the Son of David; then of the Son of Abraham, obedient unto death, according to the Isaac type (Gen.22:1-18; Heb. 11:17-19). But the prominent character of Christ in Matthew is that of the covenanted King, David's righteous Branch (Jer.23:5; 33:15). Matthew records His genealogy; His birth in Bethlehem, the city of David, according to Micah 5:2; the ministry of His forerunner according to Malachi 3:1; the ministry of the King Himself; His rejection by Israel; and His predictions of His second coming in power and great glory. How appropriate this Gospel is, standing at the head of the New Testament books. It is the transitional book, paving the way from the Old Testament to the New Testament. The Hebrew who reads the New Testament is interested instantly in the ancestry of His race; and the Gentile is immediately linked to the Old Testament when he begins to read the New Testament."

Message - "Jesus as the Messiah-King."

III. Key word - - Kingdom.

IV. Key Verses - - Matt. 1:1; 3:17.

V. Author - - Matthew.

VI. Proof of authorship. - - "All agree that Matthew is the Author of the first Gospel, although there is no statement to this effect in the Bible. Ancient tradition, recorded by Papias, 130 A.D., credits St. Matthew with the composition of a book written in Hebrew (Aramaic). Someone translated this into Greek, acknowledging his obligation to Matthew. This book did not contain the historical part of his book. We have no proof that he wrote the historical part of his book. Some say he copied it from Mark."

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NEW TESTAMENT SYNTHESIS
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO "MARK"

I. Title - The book of Mark is so called because it was written by Mark.

II. Theme - "In the book of Mark we find the picture of Jesus as the divine Servant, the mighty worker rather than the unique teacher. It is the Gospel of Jehovah's 'Servant, the Branch' (Zech. 3:8), as Matthew is the Gospel of the 'Branch unto David' (Jer. 33:15). Everywhere the servant character of the incarnate Son is manifest. There is no genealogy, for who gives the genealogy of a servant? The distinctive character of Christ in the book of Mark is that set forth in Phil. 2:6-8. But this lowly Servant, who emptied Himself of the form of God and was found in fashion as a man, was nevertheless, 'the mighty God' (Isa. 9:6), as Mark distinctly declares (1:1), and therefore, mighty works accompanied and authenticated His ministry. As benefits a Servant Gospel, Mark is characteristically a Gospel of deeds, rather than of words, Mark records about twenty of Christ's greatest miracles. These appealed to the Romans, who thought in terms of power and cared little for doctrine or teaching, but a great deal for action. This Gospel displays the power of a will surrendered to God, and the blessing and service one gives to others by obeying the divine commands and impressions through life. There is a ministry for every person, but that ministry cannot reach its highest usefulness until the life is under the control of the Lord."

Message - "Jesus as the Servant."

III. Key word - Service.

IV. Key verse - Mark 10:45

V. Author - Mark.

VI. Proof of authorship - "In the ancient times the Gospel of Mark was sometimes alluded to as the memoris of Peter, or Peter's Gospel, it being the common opinion among the early Fathers that Mark received his material from Peter and wrote largely at his dictation. The most ancient witness is the Apostolic Presbyter, whose sayings are recorded by Papias about 130 A.D. It gives the following important testimony, 'Mark neither heard the Lord nor followed Him, but attached himself to Peter.' The Presbyter's statement that Mark's Gospel depends upon Peter is confirmed by internal evidence: The book of Mark records three events - - the raising of Jairus' daughter, the transfiguration, and the agony -- at which only Peter, James, and John were present. James was soon martyred, John wrote an independent Gospel, and Peter alone remained as Mark's authority for these events. There are persons today who try to upset the faith of some by saying that the last verses in Mark 16 are not genuine, but God is always on time to prove His word. Some few years ago Mr. C. L. Freer, a wealthy American, purchased from an Arab dealer, a Greek manuscript. It turned out to be one of the most ancient, valuable and precious copies of the Greek New Testament. It was brought to America and Mr. Freer put the task of its publication into the hands of the University of Michigan, leaving the priceless find to this university at his death. This manuscript is one of the earliest known and is free from the later corrections, and it contains the last twelve

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verses of Mark. 16. An edition of the same, gotten up by the University of Michigan at Mr. Freer's expense, was presented to each of the big museums of Europe. The writer of this article, Arthur W. Frodsham, was assured by an authority in the British Museum that the Freer Codex was as old or older than the three oldest known. The first two of these three do not contain verses 9-20 in Mark 16. It was therefore argued that these words found only in one of the most ancient manuscripts were not the true sayings of Christ. But the discovery of the Codex Freer, which contains these sayings of Christ, completely silences criticism on this point. To question now the authority of the last verses of Mark 16 is to be out of date."

VII. Style -- The book of Mark is historical-narrative and discourse.

VIII. Life story of author. - "Mark (a large hammer) a Romanized Jew, was not an apostle, but an associate of the apostles. He was the son of one of the Marys of the New Testament, who was evidently a person in comfortable circumstances (Acts 12:12). He was the nephew of Barnabas, and it was owing to him that Paul and Barnabas disagreed (Acts 12:25; 15:36-41). He became the companion of Peter and recorded his utterances. The whole tone of the book reflects Peter's energetic and impulsive nature (Col.4:10; Philemon 24; II Tim. 4:11; I Peter 5:13).

IX. To whom written. -- "To all mankind in general and to the Romans in particular, consequently there are very few references to the Old Testament Scriptures, Jewish words are explained (3:17; 5:41; 7:11-34; 14:36). Jewish customs are also explained (7:3,4; 14:12; 15:42). Latin words are frequently used, e.g., legion, centurion, etc."

X. When written. -- Probably between 65-68 A.D.

XI. Where written. -- It is believed that this book was written at Rome.

XII. Glimpses of Christ. -- "In the book of Mark, Jesus is seen as a young man going from Judea to Phoenicia, mostly in Galilee, doing good. He enters the homes of the rich and the poor, He ministers by the wayside and on the sea. He does foreign missionary work beyond the Jordan in the country of the Gadarenes. He heals late into the night and rises a great while before day. He is the untiring Servant of Jehovah."

XIII. Antitype --

XIV. Mark on the Chart of the Ages. -- "Mark has no distinctive dispensational feature like Matthew; but in the 13th chapt., as in Matthew 24 and Luke 21, we see Jesus' teaching in answer to the question, 'Tell us when shall these things be and what shall be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?' Here one finds the program of events for the closing of this age."

XV. Scope. -- "From the baptism of Jesus to His ascension, covering a period of three to four years, from A.D. 26 to 30.

XVI. Contents -

1. The manifestation of the Servant-Son. (1:1-11).
2. The Servant-Son tested as to His fidelity (1:12,13).
3. The Servant-Son at work (1:14 to 13:37).
4. The Servant-Son obedient unto death (14,15).
5. The ministry of the risen Servant-Son, now exalted to all Authority. (16).

NEW TESTAMENT SYNTHESIS
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE.

I. Title -- The book of Luke is named after its author, Luke.
II. Theme -- "The book of Luke is the Gospel of the human-divine One, as the book of John is the Gospel of the divine-human One. Luke relates those things concerning Jesus which demonstrate how truly human He was. His genealogy is traced to Adam, and an account is given of His mother and of His infancy and one incident of His boyhood. The parables peculiar to Luke have distinctively the human and the seeking note. But Luke is careful to guard the deity and kingship of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:32-35). Luke then is the Gospel of 'the man whose name is the Branch'(Zech.6:12)"

Message -- "Jesus as the ideal man. He is the 'Son of Man' as well as the 'Son of God'."

III. Key Word or phrase -- "Son of Man".
IV. Key verse -- Luke 19:10
V. Author -- Luke, most likely.
VI. Proof of authorship. -- "The Gospel according to Luke is ascribed by very ancient tradition to Luke. The following considerations seem to prove beyond doubt that Luke is the author of the third Gospel. It is admitted on all hands that Luke and Acts are by the same author. The reference in Acts to the 'former treatise', the description of which exactly suits the Gospel (Acts 1:1), and the general similarity of style which both exhibit are sufficient proof that the same person wrote both books." That this author was Luke is proved in notes in notes on Acts."

VII. Style -- "The book of Luke is historic narrative and discourse. Bishop Vincent says that Luke is the best writer of Greek among the evangelists."

VIII. Life story of author -- "Luke (Companion) is called by Paul 'the beloved physician' (Col. 4:14), and was Paul's frequent companion (Philemon 24; II Tim. 4:11; Acts). Scofield says that Luke was of Jewish ancestry, but his correct Greek marks him as a Jew of Tarsus. W.H.Pike, of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, says Luke was probably a Gentile, and, if so, the only Gentile writer of Scripture. Luke was an educated man and had followed the profession of a physician."

IX. To whom written. -- "To Theophilus, the unknown, cultured friend of Luke, and to the Greeks in particular, and to all mankind in general. That this book was intended for Greek readers is the clue to its message. The Grecian ideal of perfect manliness differed from that of the Roman. While the Romans felt it to be their mission to govern, the Greeks felt it theirs to educate, elevate and perfect man. The ideal of the Roman was military glory and governmental authority; but that of the Greeks was wisdom and beauty. Campbell Morgan says that Luke was a Greek and that this fact enables us to approach the study of this Gospel intelligently. The Greek ideal was that of the perfection of the individual, and Luke sets Jesus before us in all the perfection of His human nature showing how it transcends, by virtue of the work He accomplished, anything the highest conception of Greek culture had ever conceived."

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X. When written -- Between 60 and 70 A.D.

XI. Where written --

XII. Glimpses of Christ -- "Jesus is seen here in the perfection of His life among men. Christ is described as the 'child that grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.' and 'Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.' Jesus is seen here as a man of prayer as in no other Gospel.

XIII. Antitype --

XIV. Luke on the Chart of the Ages --

"This gospel is not dispensational in the grouping of its events, like Matthew, but is chronological. Nevertheless, there is a beautiful dispensational application of its miracles and parables and statements, e.g., Luke 7:30-40. Jesus rebukes the Jews for their unbelief; then follows a beautiful example of individual faith (7:41-50), in the woman whose sins were forgiven. You see a turning from the religious system of the Jews to the individual needs of a sinful woman. Then, in chapter 8, is a world-wide parable on the sower and the lighted candle, and a new relationship to Jesus in verses 19-21. All, not merely Jews, are Jesus' brethren; all 'who hear the word of God and do it'. There is neither Jew nor Gentile now. These dispensational applications are to be found everywhere in the book. Luke 19:42 gives us the break in Daniel's seventy weeks. 'Thy day' here was Israel's day to receive their Messiah-Prince, the only time Jesus manifested Himself as Prince and it was just 69 sevens or weeks or years (483 years in all) from the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem given in Neh. 2:1-8. How wonderful are these dispensational touches."

XV. Scope -- From the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus to the ascension of Jesus, covering a period of about 34 years."

XVI. Contents --

1. Introduction (1:1-4).
2. The human relationship of Jesus (1:5 to 2:52).
3. The baptism, ancestry, and testing of Jesus (3 to 4:13)
4. The ministry of the Son of Man as Prophet-King in Galilee (4:14 to 9:50).
5. The journey of the Son of Man from Galilee to Jerusalem (9:51 to 19:44).
6. The final offer of the Son of Man as King to Israel, His rejection and sacrifice (19:45 to ch. 23).
7. The resurrection, resurrection ministry and ascension of the Son of Man (ch. 24).

NEW TESTAMENT SYNTHESIS.
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

I. Title -- The book of John is so called after its author, John.

II. Theme -- "John's Gospel is an accumulation of testimony to prove that Jesus is 'the Christ, the Son of the living God' (ch. 20:31). The book opens with a prologue setting forth the pre-existence of Jesus as the Eternal Word of God. This is followed by the forerunner's testimony. Then Jesus Himself witnesses by challenging to come and see and know by experience that He is God. Then the evidence is multiplied by the account of Jesus' miracles and words. The whole narrative throbs with the great heart of the loving Son of God. The words 'life' and 'light' and 'love' are often used. Stress is laid upon the necessity of life in order to have light (knowledge) upon life's pathway. The word 'believe' is used over 100 times and demands a will surrendered to the Son of God, as well as a mental approbation. The purpose of this book is not only that we might believe 'that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God', but 'that believing ye might have life through His name.' In the other three Gospels we have Jesus' Galilean ministry but John gives us Jesus' Judean ministry. According to the early Fathers, the Gospel of John was written at the request of the Apostle Andrew and the Asiatic bishops to combat certain errors then prevalent concerning the deity of Christ."

Message -- "Jesus, the eternal Son of God."

III. Key word -- Believe

IV. Key verse -- John 20:31

V. Author -- John

VI. Proof of authorship -- "Papias, 120 A.D., according to very ancient evidence, named John as the author of the fourth Gospel. Irenaeus, 177 A.D., a disciple of Polycarp, a disciple of John, speaks again and again of the fourth Gospel as John's. The Muratorian Fragment, 200 A.D.; Tertullian, 200 A.D., and Origen, 200 A.D., speak of the apostolic authorship as undoubted. The author of the fourth Gospel has so carefully concealed his identity that it requires considerable research and reflection to discover who he was. Internal evidence shows that the author of the fourth Gospel was an apostle and an eye-witness (1:14; 19:35; 21:24). See I John 1:1, written by the same author. John 21:20, 24, shows that the writer of this Gospel was identified with the disciple whom Jesus loved, the Son of Zebedee (21:2), who was present at the Last Supper, leaning on Jesus' breast (13:23), stood by the cross (19:26), received into his house the mother of Jesus (19:27), ran with Peter to the tomb (20:2), and was present at the sea of Tiberias (21:7). He was not James the Son of Zebedee, for James was martyred 44 A.D. (Acts 12:2). Tradition, therefore, seems to be right in asserting that he was John. The fact that the author shows a closer acquaintance with the inner life and sentiments of the apostolic circle than any other confirms the belief that he is John."

VII. Style -- "The book of John is historic narrative and discourse." "Although the Gospel of John is the deepest and most profound of all the Gospels, the most simple language is used and every truth is put in a practical way."

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

Story of the author

VIII. Life story of author -- "John (gift of Jehovah) was the son of a master-fisherman, having hired servants (Mark 1:20), and of Salome, one of the women who ministered to the Lord of their substance (Matt. 27:55,56; Luke 8:3). From this and the fact that he had a house of his own in Jerusalem (John 18:27), it is quite evident that he was in comfortable circumstances. Thought of a contemplative character, he was of hasty and uncertain temper (called a 'Son of Thunder') until grace took him in hand, and then the lion became a lamb. He became the apostle of love. Evidently he was the youngest of the apostles. He outlived all the others and is the last of all the inspired writers, writing quite 50 years after our Lord's ascension, and is the deepest and most profound of all."

IX. To whom written -- To believers in particular, and to all mankind in general.

X. When written -- Between 90 and 100 A.D.

XI. Where written -- In Ephesus, according to the early Fathers.

XII. Glimpses of Christ -- "In the Gospel according to John, Jesus is seen in the glory of His deity as nowhere else. Here He is seen in the eternity of the past dwelling in the bosom of the Father. He is seen as the eternal Word of God made flesh; as God, the Author of eternal life; as the Resurrection and the Life, the future Judge of the universe. In this Gospel Israel's Messiah is seen as prophesied in Isaiah 4:2 and Micah 5:2, where He is described as being 'beautiful and glorious', 'whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.'" In this Gospel Jesus calls Himself the 'True Vine,' in contrast to the bramble. Israel's everlasting covenant is represented by the Olive tree, and her fruit bearing by the fig tree; but her communion with Jehovah is expressed by her union with the true Vine. The fulfillment of the covenant and the bearing of fruit will not be realized until Israel accepts the true Vine and comes into vital touch with God."

XIII. Antitypes --

XIV. John on the Chart of the Ages -- See XII.

XV. Scope -- "From the Son of God dwelling in the bosom of the Father in the past eternity, to the forty days after His resurrection. The events recorded in this book cover a period of about 4 years, from A.D. 26 to 30."

XVI. Contents --

1. Prologue -- The Eternal Word incarnate in Jesus the Christ (1:1-14).
2. The witness of John the Baptist (1:15-34).
3. The public ministry of Christ (1:35 to ch. 12)
4. The private ministry of Christ to His own (13-17)
5. The sacrifice of Christ (chapters. 18,19).
6. The manifestation of Christ in resurrection (ch.20).
7. Epilogue -- Christ the Master of life and service (chapt. 21).